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Neighborhoods and Police: The Maintenance of Civil Authority

By George L. Kelling and James K. Stewart

A cardinal tenet of community policing is that a new relationship between police and neighborhoods is required if the quality of residential and commercial life is to be protected or improved in cities. This assertion raises several questions. What are neighborhoods? Do they exist, or are they largely a concoction of nostalgic policymakers, police reformers, and revisionists who perpetuate ideals that may or may not have existed in the past, but certainly are outside of current urban experience? Assuming that neighborhoods exist, what should their relationship be with police? What opportunities are offered both to neighborhoods and to police by restructuring their relationship? How should police resolve the potential conflict between the rule of law and neighborhood standards of conduct which they might be asked to uphold?

This paper addresses these questions by focusing upon three aspects of neighborhoods: (1) the neighborhood as polity; (2) the ability of a neighborhood to defend itself against crime and disorder without eliminating civility and justice from social relations there; and (3) alternate visions of the role of municipal police in neighborhoods.

Neighborhood as polity

At a minimum, neighborhoods are places in which people live or work near each other, recognize their recurring proximity, and signal this recognition to each other.[1] As Suttles[2] notes, residents of cities construct "cognitive maps" in which they allocate distinctive places as "theirs"—their neighborhood. Moreover, neighbors are not just the residents of a special geographical area but also include shopkeepers and their employees, other workers who frequent areas regularly (postal workers, for example), and even the homeless.[3]

This is one in a series of reports originally developed with some of the leading figures in American policing during their periodic meetings at Harvard University's John F. Kennedy School of Government. The reports are published so that Americans interested in the improvement and the future of policing can share in the information and perspectives that were part of extensive debates at the School's Executive Session on Policing.

The police chiefs, mayors, scholars, and others invited to the meetings have focused on the use and promise of such strategies as community-based and problem-oriented policing. The testing and adoption of these strategies by some police agencies signal important changes in the way American policing now does business. What these changes mean for the welfare of citizens and the fulfillment of the police mission in the next decades has been at the heart of the Kennedy School meetings and this series of papers.

We hope that through these publications police officials and other policymakers who affect the course of policing will debate and challenge their beliefs just as those of us in the Executive Session have done.

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The *intensity* of neighboring relationships depends on many factors, including geographical and physical characteristics of the community, ethnic and kinship networks, affective attachment of residents to the neighborhood, home and business ownership, building construction features, local facility usage, pedestrian and automotive traffic patterns, the amount of time neighbors spend in the area, as well as demographic patterns (e.g., the number of children, non-working adults, and aged who live in a community). The *content* of neighboring can range from curt nods of the head ("good fences make good neighbors") to regularly scheduled neighborhood meetings ("strength through unity").[4]

Periodicity characterizes both the intensity and content of neighboring. Citizens live in time, as well as area, zones. Periodicity has two sets of implications.

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First, many residents abandon their neighborhoods during the day: workers may commute to their workplaces and children may be bused to schools outside their immediate neighborhood. Other people use neighborhoods during particular times: merchants arrive for the opening of their shops and depart after closing; shoppers arrive and depart; postal workers move through a neighborhood on a relatively predictable schedule. During particular times, the homeless can comprise the residents of a neighborhood. Traffic on major thoroughfares ebbs and flows daily. Bars open and close.

Second, citizen perceptions about areas change depending on the time of the day or day of the week. During rush hour while awaiting transportation, citizens can view a neighborhood as being theirs, in a sense, and a comfortable place in which to be. The same area at another time of day or week (midnight or Saturday) may be perceived as extraordinarily alien and threatening.

Citizen participation in neighborhood activities and governance has long been perceived in this country as central to the formation of an individual's character, the inculcation of traditional values, and the maintenance of freedom. Integral parts of this participation have been self-help and self-governance. Despite this political philosophy, the aim or the consequence of American urban *policy* during the last hundred years has been to decrease the influence of neighborhoods in American life. What factors have contributed to this decline?

First, the progressive reform movement that centralized city government has contributed to a decline in neighborhood influence. As Glazer notes:

> All during the twentieth century, indeed until the mid-1960s, proposals for city reform generally followed ... progressive tradition: make the mayor or the board of supervisors stronger.[5]

The consequence of strengthening centralized city government has been the reduction of the political strength and capacity for self-help of neighborhoods.

Second, congruent with the centralization of political power were the professionalization and bureaucratization of services, especially social and police services. Problem solving and the provision of services not only came under the political and administrative control of executives, but also were provided by newly developing bureaucracies with full-time staff recruited and promoted on the basis of achieved qualifications, professional or otherwise.[6] Within neighborhoods, self-help in many areas, such as education, was eliminated or, in the case of police, denigrated and discouraged.

Third, during the 1950's and 1960's, urban renewal policies decimated many neighborhoods in the name of eliminating slums, improving the urban housing stock, and integrating ethnic groups into America's "melting pot." It seems ironic that many neighborhood self-help groups organized in resistance to the implementation of such policies in their immediate locales.

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Fourth, low-income housing developments concentrated on the construction of high-rise apartments rather than on low-rise or single-dwelling residences. Jane Jacobs and Oscar Newman have written persuasively about the largely negative consequences of such building practices on neighborhoods and cities.[7]

Fifth, transportation policies concentrated on facilitating the movement of automobiles into and out of cities, at the expense of the public building, improvement, or even maintenance of transportation into and within cities. Such policies encouraged the abandonment of cities for suburbs and left isolated those citizens who did remain in urban neighborhoods.[8]

Sixth, during the twentieth century, public spaces have been redefined. The street traditionally was a diversified place enjoyed and used for its own sake—a place to congregate, meet others, enjoy human-scaled architecture. But during the midcentury the tower-block—high-rise buildings surrounded by open spaces—came to symbolize the new use of public space: segregated by purpose, with the street serving primarily as a means of transportation between facilities. Thus, streets became public areas through which people pass to gain easy access to specific facilities: quasi-public and quasi-private shopping, recreational, residential, and work areas in which internal control is privatized.[9]

Finally, for good or ill, social policies that relied on busing to ensure equality of educational opportunity eroded the strengths of neighborhoods.

To be sure, these trends did not operate uniformly across cities. Moreover, these forces notwithstanding, destruction of neighborhood life and polity has not been uniform within individual cities or throughout the country. In some cities such as Chicago, at least through the administration of the late Mayor Daley, neighborhoods and wards maintain considerable power over the provision of city services and the allocation of political goods and services. Likewise, in Boston for example, some neighborhoods have considerably more power and access to goods and services than others.[10] One neighborhood, for example, not only garnered its own foot patrol officer who patrolled the area regularly at a time when neither foot patrol nor regular beat assignments characterized police tactics, but successfully lobbied to restrict the types of off-duty assignments police could accept.[11] These variations in neighborhoods are explained by factors such as the political culture of the city, the form of city government, the demographic composition of the given neighborhood, the extent to which neighbors feel threatened and have been able to mobilize.

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Moreover, contemporary trends rejected the centralization of governmental power. During the 1960's, dissatisfaction with centralization had its inchoate beginnings.

> At the local level, in the 1960s for the first time the intellectual elite and the liberal national media abandoned the argument of progressive reformers and supported demands for *decentralization* of city functions.[12]

Although support of decentralization was initiated by advocates from the political left, by the late 1970's it had become as popular with the political right.[13]

Today the call for devolution of power and control over services, indeed, the call for a self-help approach to problem solving, has spread from the intellectual and political elite to residents within communities and neighborhoods. No longer are citizens in many communities willing to hear from remote politicians what government *cannot* do and citizens *should not* do; citizens are demanding new kinds of accountability and responsibility; and neighborhoods are becoming sources of polity rather than mere locales in which people live and work.

"No longer are citizens in many communities willing to hear from remote politicians what government* cannot *do and citizens* should not *do ..."

Yet there is one important dimension in which neighborhoods, even those that actually function as political units, do not operate as a true political system: the exercise of lawful coercive force. Neighborhoods can serve as a polity, whose citizens lobby, unofficially govern in many dimensions, indeed even patrol streets and parks. But the exercise of official coercive force is reserved for city hall, for government. This is not to say that neighborhoods do not use coercion. Most often it takes the form of social persuasion, threats, and informal means of approval and disapproval. Sometimes, however, illegal force is used in neighborhoods by criminal gangs, for example, who may use threats, vandalism, extortion, and other forms of coercion.[14] Regardless, "official" government largely maintains a monopoly on legitimate use of force, primarily through its police departments.[15]

Neighborhoods defending themselves

Six factors in neighborhoods may contribute to the defense of a neighborhood against crime and disorder:

1. Individual citizens in association with police and criminal justice agencies. Individuals may act on their own to notify police of something untoward in their neighborhood or elsewhere. Moreover, citizens can become involved in other elements of the criminal justice system in other ways, for example as witnesses in court hearings.

2. Individual citizens acting alone. Individuals may act on their own to protect themselves, others, and their neighbor-

hood from crime, disorder, and fear. These actions include: buying locks, weapons, alarm systems, and other hardware; avoiding certain locations; restricting activities; assisting, or not assisting, other persons who have difficulty; moving out of the neighborhood; and hiring protection from private security firms.

3. Private groups. Groups of citizens may act on their own behalf to protect the neighborhood, its residents, and users. Their actions include holding meetings: organizing neighborhood watch groups; patrolling, lobbying, creating telephone trees and "safe houses" for children; and monitoring courts. Further, they may purchase private security to protect their homes, streets, entranceways, or lobbies.

"Groups of citizens may act on their own behalf to protect the neighborhood, its residents, and users."

4. Formal private organizations. Organizations such as funded community activist and community development organizations implement and maintain neighborhood programs that may include recreation for youths, victim assistance, gang and other forms of youth work, and community organization. (These organizations are different from traditional social agencies that operate citywide.)

5. Commercial firms. Small shopkeepers and large corporations such as hospitals, universities, shopping malls, and other institutions may purchase, or in some cases provide their own, proprietary protective services.

6. Public criminal justice agencies. Police, as well as the other elements of the criminal justice system, may operate on their own to defend the safety of neighborhoods.

Several observations can be made about these elements of a community's self-defense capacity. First, in the Anglo-Saxon tradition, crime control was a private, community responsibility that only recently has become primarily a public responsibility. Most public organizations of social control are barely 150 years old.[16] Moreover, American political ideology still holds that private solutions to problems, whether the problems are related to health, education, welfare, or crime and disorder, are preferable to public solutions. Just as neighborhoods provide the informal political infrastructure that keeps urban government afloat,[17] neighborhood and private social control provide the underpinnings on which public institutions of control build.

Second, the impact of the elements of neighborhood social control is not necessarily cumulative. As the following examples suggest, each element can detract or contribute to the competence of a neighborhood to defend itself against crime and disorder:

- A person who withdraws behind heavy doors and substantial locks, armed with a guard dog and weapons, and who refuses to interact with neighbors, even to the extent of observing behavior in the street, may be detracting from the self-defense of the community rather than contributing to it. Such behavior may well be an example of poor citizenship and irresponsibility rather than prudent civil behavior.

- A neighborhood anticrime group that consists exclusively of homeowning whites in a racially mixed neighborhood with many renters may detract from community order by increasing the level of racial antagonism between groups.

- A community agency that sponsors a food program for homeless persons may increase the level of citizen fear as a result of the increasing number of homeless persons who frequent the area.

- A large food chain that develops a neighborhood shopping center that includes a record-video store and a video-game parlor may attract many youths to the facility. Moreover, if the chain retains substantial numbers of off-duty police officers, it may keep order and control youths in the facility. Nevertheless, although the facility might be secure with more police in the neighborhood, the police might define their responsibility as protecting the assets of the food chain. Increased numbers of youths, who now congregate in areas adjacent to the shopping center, might engage in horseplay, commit minor acts of vandalism on nearby residences, and, as a consequence, significantly increase the level of disorder and fear in the neighborhood.

"... the more police tend to solve problems, the less likely it is that people will resort to their own devices."

- Black and Baumgartner[18] raise the interesting point that the relationship between the intensity of police presence in neighborhoods and the amount of citizen self-help in solving problems might be inverse: that is, the more police tend to solve problems, the less likely it is that people will resort to their own devices. A consequence of increased police presence

and activity might be just the opposite of desired results—the weakening, rather than the strengthening, of a neighborhood.

Note that the forms that neighborhood defense take can not only increase or decrease the capacity of neighborhoods to defend themselves, but also can influence the quality of neighborhood life in other ways as well. Purchasing guns and locks does little or nothing to create or sustain community relationships; they might even interfere with their development or maintenance. Similarly, calling police to deal with incidents does little to create relationships within neighborhoods. Citizen patrols, neighborhood watch, neighborhood meetings with police to discuss problems, on the other hand, all foster the development of neighborhood relationships and sense of community.

There are legitimate reasons to be concerned about fairness and equity in the supply of resources for community defense. The poor are in need of as much protection as the rich—at times, more. Moreover, there are reasons to fear that the actions of the well-to-do to defend themselves might increase the jeopardy of the less well-off. Thus, we are concerned about the public quality of individual and organizational responses to crime, disorder, and fear. Guns and locks might protect individuals but do nothing for neighborhood security. Walling off corporations from communities by architectural and security measures can secure those organizations but further erode community bonds and safety.[19]

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Also, ensuring the rights of those who have a different sense of public morality and the rights of offenders is an important part of the public quality of a community's self-defense efforts. We will discuss these issues in some detail later.

In sum, although we are developing some knowledge about the ecology of crime in cities and neighborhoods,[20] we know practically nothing about the ecology of neighborhood or city self-defense. Depending on circumstances, elements of control (1) complement each other and thereby improve overall neighborhood self-defense; (2) neutralize each other and cancel out their impact; or (3) interact to make problems worse. We simply do not know how to take the different circumstances into account.

Both critics and supporters of the idea of neighborhood primacy in efforts to control crime, fear, and disorder have been troubled by the limited evidence of the success of community crime control efforts and by the limited number of citizens who participate in such efforts. Although we hope that such efforts will meet with success (and believe that over the long term they will) and wish that many more citizens would involve themselves in such efforts, we do not share the concerns mentioned above.

"... many neighborhoods appear to be in the hands of 'caretakers' ... Their numbers may not be large ... but their influence and potential are."

Regarding the issue of effectiveness, we agree with Nathan Glazer:

> Whatever the failures of community control and community participation, whatever the modification of the new procedures built on the slogan of more power to the people, the thesis that had characterized the old progressivism, with its enthronement of the strong mayor, the single powerful board, the strong federal government, and the wisdom of the experts they selected, a thesis that had been dominant for sixty years or more among liberal experts on government, never returned. Community control and participation may not have been a great success, but it led to no desire to return to a situation that was seen as even less desirable.[21]

Given the continuing intolerably high levels of crime, fear, and disorder, and the inability of police and other criminal justice agencies to manage it effectively, this is as true in community self-defense as in other areas Glazer may have in mind.

Moreover, we do not despair at the number of citizens who actively participate in neighborhood governance. Elsewhere, one of the authors (Kelling) has discussed this issue and noted that many neighborhoods appear to be in the hands of "caretakers"—persons who meet regularly, note neighborhood conditions, schedule a few annual events, maintain liaison with other neighborhood groups and "official government," and rally neighborhood forces in the face of some threat.[22] Their numbers may not be large (often six to ten persons), but their influence and potential are. Suttles describes a similar situation:

> Protest groups, conservation committees, landowners' groups, and realty associations spring into existence,

> thrive, and then decline, as the issue which brought them into existence waxes and wanes. All this tends to give the defended neighborhood an ephemeral and transient appearance, as if it were a social artifact. But these social forms are real enough, and they leave at least a residue of a formula for subsequent cohesion.[23]

What is clear is that just as neighborhoods vary in their ability to obtain goods and services, they also vary in their competence to defend themselves against predators. Defining neighborhood competence, however, is difficult. Peter Hunt, a member of the Executive Session on Community Policing and former executive director of the Chicago Area Project, uses such phrases as "problem-solving community," "self-regulating," "organized," and "able to exert power on behalf of its interests" to describe neighborhood competence.[24] Crenson[25] would add others: "rich in civility," "able to respond to crises," and "well governed." Suttles[26] identifies strong communities as places in which "communion" of personal thoughts and feelings can take place among others with whom one has chosen to live or work.

"Stripped of working- and middle-class residents—the skills they possess, the values they represent, and the institutions they support—such neighborhoods and their residents experience massive problems."

The issue of neighborhood competence is of enormous significance. Current discussions of extraordinarily troubled neighborhood areas, such as the Robert Taylor Homes in Chicago, raise basic issues of the competence of neighborhoods to defend themselves.[27] Stripped of working- and middle-class residents—the skills they possess, the values they represent, and the institutions they support—such neighborhoods and their residents experience massive problems. As Wilson notes:

> . . . the communities of the underclass are plagued by massive joblessness, flagrant and open lawlessness, and low-achieving schools, and therefore tend to be avoided by outsiders. Consequently, the residents of these areas, whether women and children of welfare families or aggressive street criminals, have increasingly been socially isolated from mainstream patterns of behavior.[28]

It is widely believed that a key element of the vitality, or competence, of neighborhoods is commerce, especially small shops that appear to have a substantial stake in the civil functioning of neighborhoods. Yet little is known, beyond narrative discussions, about the contribution of commerce to neighborhoods, especially commerce's contribution to the capacity of a neighborhood to defend itself against crime, fear, and disorder.[29,30] However, as one of the authors of this paper points out:

> Reducing crime and its disruptive effect on community ties eliminates the largest and most devastating obstacle to development in many poor neighborhoods. And where businesses can develop, they encourage further growth and help create a community's cohesiveness and identity.[31]

Neighborhoods and their self-help activities also have their dark side. By their very nature, cities, and neighborhoods within them, are pluralistic places in which strangers routinely meet. These characteristics, pluralism and the interaction among strangers, present latitude for civil and moral injustices.

Pluralism characterizes neighborhoods in two dimensions: the relationship of different groups (often ethnic or racial) *between* neighborhoods, and the relationship of different groups *within* neighborhoods. Interneighborhood pluralism needs little discussion—it is widely accepted as descriptive of cities. Intraneighborhood pluralism, however, has not been as readily apparent.

The ethnic, racial, and cultural homogeneity of neighborhoods has been emphasized in popular images of neighborhoods as well as in scholarly work.[32] Yet, contemporary research has demonstrated that neighborhoods, even those that appear to be homogeneous on some basis, are characterized by considerable heterogeneity. A particular group might culturally *dominate* an area; yet as Suttles[33] and Merry[34] have demonstrated, neighborhoods are characterized by extensive internal diversity—individuals and groups move into and out of neighborhoods, differing groups share space, and boundaries (cognitive, as well as physical) shift over time.

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Intra- and interneighborhood pluralism and the use of neighborhoods by strangers create the possibility for conflict between groups and individuals who maintain different lifestyles, define neighborhood civility in different ways, or wish to impose their standards on others—either in terms of how they behave or how they wish others to behave.

Most transactions between members of different groups or strangers occur with little difficulty. Goffman[35] demonstrates clearly that even strangers meet in patterned uncommitted interactions. That is, a traffic relationship is maintained, the purpose of which is to avoid untoward physical contact, achieve satisfactory spatial distance, avoid eye contact, and manage civilly the numerous contacts that occur as strangers negotiate cities.

"When an offense occurs between strangers, the incident itself and the behaviors signifying offense are generally minor—part of the cost of living a cosmopolitan life."

Within or between neighborhoods, problems develop when individuals, groups, or residents of a neighborhood either take or give offense.[36,37] When an offense occurs between strangers, the incident itself and the behaviors signifying offense are generally minor—part of the cost of living a cosmopolitan life. Feelings may be ruffled, demeanor turned grumpy, but all of meager consequence.

When, however, the offense is major (prostitutes haranguing pedestrian and automotive traffic) or neighbors become aggrieved too easily (neighborhood residents resenting minorities passing through their neighborhood), civility is shattered and the possibility of serious conflict erupting is created. In the case of prostitutes haranguing citizens, almost everyone in the neighborhood would agree that something should be done, if necessary by police.

The case of minorities in neighborhoods, however, is an example of the potential tyranny of neighborhoods, indeed, the potential tyranny of democracy—the suppression of persons who for one reason or another are considered objectionable.[38] This is the dark side of intimate neighborhoods: just as neighborhoods can be places of congeniality, sociability, and safety, they can also be places of smallness, meanness, and tyranny.

The role of police in neighborhoods

Police have been depicted as a community's bastion against crime, disorder, and fear: the "thin blue line" fortifying a community against predators and wrongdoers.[39] This notion, if not promulgated by the current generation of police leaders, at least has not been denied by most police. In this view, police are a city's professional defense against crime and disorder; the responsibility of citizens is to report crimes quickly to police via 911 systems, provide information to police about criminal events, and to cooperate with prosecutors and courts in the adjudication of offenders.

This is a troubling and deeply mistaken metaphor for police. First, it suggests that police are out there alone fighting evil misdoers. This is specious. We know that citizens, groups, and organizations are deeply involved in dealing with community problems. Second, the imagery of the thin blue line misrepresents the origins of crime and disorder. True, some predators do enter neighborhoods from outside, but a significant portion of neighborhood problems, even serious crime problems such as assault, child abuse, burglary, date-rape, and others have their origins within a neighborhood as well as from without. Third, it misrepresents the objectives of the majority of police work. The imagery suggests isolating persons who are dangerous from the good people of the community. This might be true for some serious and repeat offenders. If, however, we believe that the origins of many problems are within neighborhoods and involve disputes, disorder, and conflicts, as well as serious crime, a more proper representation of police is that of problem identifiers, dispute resolvers, and managers of relations—not merely persons authorized to arrest criminals.[40]

"... the imagery of the thin blue line misrepresents the origins of crime and disorder."

The metaphor of the thin blue line is *deeply* mistaken not just because it misrepresents police business, but because it has largely determined how police have shaped their relationship to neighborhoods and communities in the past. Moreover, it has often put them in conflict with neighborhoods.

- Police saw their primary responsibility as crime control and solving crimes; citizens wanted police to improve the quality of urban life and create feelings of personal security, as well as to control crime.
- Police wanted to be independent of political and neighborhood control—they viewed such accountability as tantamount to corruption; citizens wanted police to be accountable to neighborhoods—inevitably a form of political accountability.
- Police wanted to structure impersonal relations with citizens and neighborhoods; citizens wanted intimate relations with police.
- Police tactics emphasized automobile preventive patrol and rapid response to calls for service; citizens

wanted foot patrol or other tactics that would increase the quantity and improve the quality of police/citizen interaction (as well as rapid response).

- Police saw themselves as the thin blue line between order and chaos; citizens often saw themselves as the primary source of control, backed up by police.
- Police emphasized centralized efficiency; citizens desired decentralized operations and local decision-making. An expression of this is participation in meetings: police send community relations or crime prevention personnel outside the decisionmaking chain of command for the neighborhood; citizens prefer personnel empowered to make decisions.[41]

Police are starting to modify their positions, however, and in doing so have begun to change the nature of their relationship to communities.[42] We believe that the following principles are now shaping the relationship between police and neighborhoods in many cities and should shape the position of police in most communities.

1. Community self-defense against crime and disorder is primarily a matter of private social control supported, but never supplanted, by public police.

2. Because neighborhoods vary in the nature of their problems and in their capacity for self-help (their ecology of self-defense), police tactics must be tailored to specific neighborhoods.

"Deprived of community authorization, police are vulnerable to charges of both neglect and abuse."

3. Tailoring tactics to neighborhoods will require decentralization of police authority and tactical decisionmaking to lower levels of the organization and the empowerment of sergeants and patrol officers to make decisions about the types of problems with which they will deal and the tactics they will employ to deal with them.

4. Precinct and beat configuration must be changed to reflect community and neighborhood form.

5. In the most troubled neighborhoods, especially those now being ravaged by the problems associated with drugs, police must at least seek authority from residents to act on their behalf. In neighborhoods that are most bereft of self-help capacities, in inner-city underclass areas, and in neighborhoods most plagued by lawlessness, it is tempting for police to operate independently and without community consultations. The problems are so acute and the resources so meager that consultations may appear inefficient and needlessly time-consuming. This serves neither police nor residents well. Deprived of community authorization, police are vulnerable to charges of both neglect and abuse. Moreover, the willingness of police to fill in the gap and "do it themselves" deprives citizens of the very kinds of experiences that American political philosophy suggests will lead them to "acquire a taste for order" and develop their capacities as citizens.

"Police, like other agencies of government, should not do for citizens what citizens can do for themselves."

6. If it is believed that the function of police is to support and increase the inherent strengths and self-governing capacities of neighborhoods that enable them to defend themselves against crime and disorder, it follows that a priority of police in bereft neighborhoods is not only to gain authorization for police action but also to help develop capacities for community self-defense. Given the desperate circumstances of some inner-city neighborhoods, this will be an extremely difficult task. It will, at times, be extraordinarily risky for citizens to attempt to defend their neighborhoods. The risk can be justified only if police commit themselves to pervasive presence for long durations of time. Such presence must always support and encourage self-help.

7. In neighborhoods that are capable of self-help and governance, police activities should be designed and implemented for the purpose of strengthening neighborhoods. Police, like other agencies of government, should not do for citizens what citizens can do for themselves. There are reasons to believe that when government does supplant self-help, the capacity of citizens for self-help diminishes.

8. Because different neighborhoods have different interests, interests that at times conflict with each other, police will have to manage interneighborhood, as well as intraneighborhood, relations. Neighborhoods require free commerce and penetration by strangers and other groups if they are to thrive.

9. Police must understand that just as their task is to support the self-help capacities of neighborhoods when those capacities are used for appropriate ends, they must thwart

self-help capacities of neighborhoods when they turn petty, mean, and tyrannical. Police are well-equipped for this. During the past two decades "constitutional policing," at first resisted by many police but later embraced and incorporated by the great chiefs and police leaders of the era, has empowered police to withstand parochial pressure.[43] This does not mean that police will not have to be vigilant in resisting inappropriate pressures; it means that police executives have moved to instill the values and policies that will help them maintain constitutional practice. Justice is as important as security in policing.

Conclusion

Police are now adapting to changes taking place in American society. One of those changes is the reversal in the trend to centralization in government and the reemergence of neighborhoods as a source of governance. This change raises a hot issue for police. Are they agents or servants of neighborhoods?

While we have emphasized restructuring police and increasing their accountability to neighborhoods, we do not see them as servants of neighborhoods. Police protect other values, as well as neighborhood values. What are those values? At least three.

First, public police must be distributed fairly across cities on the basis of neighborhood need, not neighborhood political clout.

Second, police must be able to maintain organizational integrity. Police departments must have the right to develop and maintain their own personnel, administrative, and technological capacities without political interference.

Finally, they must defend minority interests and civil rights against the more parochial interests of some neighborhoods.

"... police must view their role in neighborhoods as a means of reestablishing the neighboring relationships and strengthening the institutions that make a community competent ..."

Neighborhoods need police for assistance in the control of crime, fear, and disorder. Some neighborhoods need police only rarely; in other neighborhoods pervasive police presence is required to assure the simplest of rights—shopping, keeping one's property, even keeping one's life or physical well-being. Regardless of the severity of neighborhood problems or the competence of neighborhoods in dealing with them, the police monopoly over legitimate use of force requires that police assist neighborhoods when force might be required to settle neighborhood problems.

To respond appropriately police must view their role in neighborhoods as a means of reestablishing the neighboring relationships and strengthening the institutions that make a community competent and able to deal with its problems. Zachary Tumin has summarized the role of a police officer in carrying through such a function:

> The role of the professional police officer as a professional is therefore to know the status of his local institutions; to understand how, when, and why they work; to understand their strengths and their vulnerabilities; to know their members or users, that is, to know the people whose relationships comprise the institutions, and why they participate or don't.[44]

Police are now attempting to create a world in which they are more responsive to neighborhoods and communities. Their task is not just to serve; it is also to lead by helping to foster wider tolerance of strangers, minorities, and differing definitions of morality. How will this be accomplished? Many tactics will be used. But, at a minimum, it will require setting firm control over their own conduct and embodying a civil approach.

Notes

1. Ulf Hannerz, *Exploring the City*, New York, Columbia University Press, 1980.

2. Gerald D. Suttles, *The Social Construction of Communities*, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1972: 22.

3. In a Boston neighborhood observed by one of this paper's authors, George Kelling, residents who organized a community anticrime effort that included both regular meetings and citizen patrol invited a homeless woman who lived in a corner park to a special meeting on rape prevention. She not only attended the meeting, she recounted her own rape. Subsequent citizen patrols always checked the park to ensure her safety. In fact, it could be argued that there are times in some areas of cities when the homeless comprise the residency of the neighborhood—downtown areas, for example, which other citizens abandon during the evenings for their own residential neighborhoods.

4. See, for example, Stephanie W. Greenberg, William M. Rohe, and Jay R. Williams, *Informal Citizen Action and Crime Prevention at the Neighborhood Level: Synthesis and Assessment of the Research*, Research Triangle Park, North Carolina, Research Triangle Institute, March 1984; Hannerz, *Exploring the City*.

5. Nathan Glazer, *The Limits of Social Policy*, Cambridge, Massachusetts, Harvard University Press, 1988: 120.

6. Andrew J. Polsky, "Welfare policy: Why the past has no future," *Democracy* 3, 1 (Winter 1983): 21–33.

7. Jane Jacobs, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*, New York, Random House, 1961; Oscar Newman, *Defensible Space: Crime Prevention Through Urban Design*. New York, Macmillan, 1972.

8. Glenn Yago, "Sick transit," *Democracy* 3, 1 (Winter 1983): 43–55.

9. Marcus Felson, "Routine activities and crime prevention in the developing metropolis," *Criminology* 25, 4 (1987).

10. Research on neighborhood groups recounted in this paper was conducted during 1982 and 1983 and reported in George L. Kelling, "Neighborhoods and police," Occasional Paper, Program in Criminal Justice Policy and Management, John F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts, August 1985.

11. This neighborhood was laced with many nightclubs and bars. Police were employed off-duty as security personnel. When conflicts arose between establishment owners and residents over the noise at bar-closing time, residents believed that public police, employed off-duty by owners, took the side of owners against residents.

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12. Glazer, *Limits of Social Policy*: 121.

13. Ibid.: 122.

14. An interesting account of neighbors using physical force was recounted in the *New York Times*, October 8, 1988. Two citizens in a Detroit neighborhood burned down a building alleged to be used by drug dealers, admitted it, and blamed their need to do it on the failure of city and police officials to heed their requests for assistance. Tried, the two were found innocent by their peers. The jury foreman was quoted: "I imagine the verdict does set out a message in two directions—to the Mayor and the Chief of Police that more has to be done about crack houses." Another juror said he would have done the same thing, but then added: "No, I would have been more violent." The Wayne County Prosecutor said after the verdict: "Vigilantism simply will not be tolerated."

15. Egon Bittner, *The Function of Police in Modern Society*, Washington, D.C., U.S. Government Printing Office, 1970.

16. See, for example, Leon Radzinowicz, *A History of English Criminal Law, V. 2: The Enforcement of the Law*, London, Stevens & Sons, 1956.

17. Matthew B. Crenson, *Neighborhood Politics*, Cambridge, Massachusetts, Harvard University, 1982: 19.

18. Donald Black and M.P. Baumgartner, "On self help in modern society," in Donald Black, *The Manners and Customs of the Police*, New York. Academic Press, 1980: 193–208.

19. See, for example, James K. Stewart, "The urban strangler: How crime causes poverty in the inner city," *Policy Review* 37 (Summer 1986), for examples of corporations that have done just the opposite and contributed to community life through the forms that their security efforts took.

20. See, for example, Lawrence E. Cohen and Marcus Felson, "Social change and crime rate trends: A routine activity approach," *American Sociological Review* 44 (1979): 588–608.

21. Glazer, *Limits of Social Policy*: 123.

22. Kelling, "Neighborhoods and police."

23. Suttles, *Social Construction of Communities*: 36.

24. Peter Hunt, "Community development—should it be included as part of the police mission," note drafted for Executive Session on Community Policing, Program in Criminal Justice Policy and Management, John F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1987.

25. Crenson, *Neighborhood Politics*: 18.

26. Suttles, *Social Construction of Communities*: 265.

27. See, for example, Gerald D. Suttles, *The Social Order of the Slum*, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1968; William Julius Wilson, *The Truly Disadvantaged: the Inner City, the Underclass, and Public Policy*, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1987.

28. W. J. Wilson, *Truly Disadvantaged*: 58.

29. See, for example, Jane Jacobs, *Death and Life of . . . Cities*, for a discussion of the importance of local commerce in the maintenance of neighborhood safety.

30. Ulf Hannerz notes both the importance and lack of research about the role of commerce in neighborhoods. "One also finds neighborhoods more or less wholly recruited on a work basis, such as shopping streets with shopkeepers and their employees as daytime neighbors. Of their kind of neighboring there is hardly any ethnography." *Exploring the City*: 264.

31. Stewart, "Urban strangler": 6.

32. See, for example, Robert E. Park, Ernest W. Burgess, and Robert D. McKenzie, *The City*, 4th edition, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1967.

33. Suttles, *Social Construction of Communities*: 25.

34. Sally Engle Merry, *Urban Danger: Life in a Neighborhood of Strangers*, Philadelphia, Temple University Press, 1981: 93–124.

35. Erving Goffman, *Relations in Public*, New York, Basic Books, 1971.

36. This is based on Mark H. Moore's definition of civility: "Neither to give nor take offense easily." Personal conversation.

37. Marcus Felson suggests that the problem of dealing with strangers is becoming even more complicated in contemporary American cities, characterized as they are by large numbers of highly mobile untended youths (the source of the majority of the problems of crime, disorder, and fear) and untended neighborhoods (two-career marriages). N. 9 above, "Routine activities and crime prevention in the developing metropolis."

38. This fear was expressed early in America's history by Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, V. 1 [1833], New York, Vintage Books, 1954.

39. See, for example, Anthony V. Bouza, "Police unions: paper tigers or roaring lions?" in William A. Geller, ed., *Police Leadership in America: Crisis and Opportunity*, New York, Praeger, 1985.

40. For a discussion of the erosion of this belief, see George L. Kelling, "Police and Communities: the Quiet Revolution," *Perspectives on Policing* No. 1, National Institute of Justice and Harvard University, Washington, D.C., February 1988.

41. This is adapted from Kelling, "Neighborhoods and police," p. 22.

42. For a discussion of the reasons behind this change, see Kelling, "Police and Communities: the Quiet Revolution."

43. James K. Stewart, one of this paper's authors, has pointed out that the period 1960–1980 is likely to be remembered as the "constitutional era"—the era when chiefs of police like Patrick V. Murphy, Clarence Kelley, Robert Igleburger, and many others embraced, rather than resisted, many of the major constitutional and legal decisions that affected police practice (*Miranda*, the exclusionary rule, etc.).

44. Zachary Tumin, "Managing relations with the community," Working Paper #86–05–06, Program in Criminal Justice Policy and Management, John F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts, November 1986, final page.

The Executive Session on Policing, like other Executive Sessions at Harvard's Kennedy School of Government, is designed to encourage a new form of dialog between high-level practitioners and scholars, with a view to redefining and proposing solutions for substantive policy issues. Practitioners rather than academicians are given majority representation in the group. The meetings of the Session are conducted as loosely structured seminars or policy debates.

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